

in the community."¹ "As in the Renaissance, so now [in the Catholic reaction] vice trickled downward from above, infiltrating the mass of the people with its virus." ² It is the classes who produce variation; it is the masses who carry forward the traditional mores.

53. Fallacies about the masses and classes. It is a fallacy to infer that the masses have some occult wisdom or inspiration by virtue of which they select what is wise, right, and good from what the classes offer. There is, also, no device by which it is possible to obtain from the masses, in advance or on demand, a judgment on any proposed changes or innovations. The masses are not an oracle. If any answers can be obtained on the problems of life, such answers will come rather from the classes. The two sections of society are such that they may cooperate with advantage to the good of all. Neither one has a right or a better claim to rule the society.

54. Action of the masses on thoughts. Fifty years ago Darwin put some knowledge into the common stock. The peasants and artisans of his time did nothing of the kind. What the masses do with thoughts is that they rub them down into counters just as they take coins from the mint and smooth them down by wear until they are only disks of metal. The masses understand, for instance, that Darwin said that "men are descended from monkeys." Only summary and glib propositions of that kind can ever get currency. The learned men are all the time trying to recoin them and give them at least partial reality. Ruskin set afloat some notions of art criticism, which have penetrated all our cultivated classes. They are not lost, but see what has become of them in fifty years by popularization.

A little later
a new gospel of furniture and house decoration
was published.
The masses have absorbed it. See what they
have made of it.
Eastlake wanted no machine work, but machinery
was not to be
defeated. It can make lopsided things if those are
the fashion,;
and it can make all the construction show if
Eastlake has got
the notion into the crowd that the pegs ought to
be on the out-
side. Thinking and understanding are too hard
work. If any one

¹ Lecky, *Morals*, I, 262.
455. " .

² Symonds, *Catholic Reaction*, I,